

THE ⁸
Love-sick Spouse,
Roger OR THE *Mahewes*
SUBSTANCE
OF FOUR
SERMONS:

Preached on *Canticles* 2. 5.

By *William Gearing* Minister of the Gospel.

*Habet omnis amor Vim suam, nec potest vacare amor
in animâ amantis.* August. in Psalm 121.

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Unto the Right Worshipful,
Sir *THOMAS WILBRAHAM*
OF
WOODHEY
IN THE
COUNTY of *CHESTER*
BARONET:

And to the VERTUOUS LADY,
ELIZABETH WILBRAHAM,
HIS WIFE.

WILLIAM GEARING

Dedicateth this ensuing Discourse,

AS

A Publick Testimonial of his
Hearty Thanks for their great re-
spects manifested unto Him.

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OF
WOOLLEY

THE
DEDICATED THIS

A PUBLIC TESTIMONIAL OF THE
THANKS OF THE



THE Love-sick Spouse.

CANTICLES 2. 5.

*Stay me with Flaggons, Comfort me with Apples,
for I am sick of Love.*

CHAP. I.

The Introduction.



Although many spiritual things in this Book are lapt up in carnal expressions: Yet there is nothing of the flesh in all this Dialogue: therefore the Jewish Doctors would not have the common people to read this Book till they were thirty years old, lest they should take that carnally, which is to be understood in a spiritual and mystical sence. All delights are let into the soul by the senses: therefore doth the Spouse describe the Lord Jesus by such things as are congruous to every sense: To the smell he is Myrrhe, Frankincense, Spikenard, and all kind of perfumes: To the taste,

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taste, he is Wine, Manna and Apples; To the eye, he is beauty and comeliness: every sense and every affection may be fully satisfied with Christ.

In the beginning of this Chapter there is an interchangeable Discourse, or Dialogue between the Bridegroom and the Bride. The Bridegroom speaks *ver. 1, 2.* and the Bride, *ver. 3, 4, 5.* The Bridegroom speaks first of himself, *ver. 1. I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the Vallies;* there is a transcendent sweetness, and an incomparable beauty in the Lord Jesus. Then he speaks of the Church, *ver. 2. As the Lilly, among Thorns, so is my Love among the Daughters.* All other Assemblies compared with the Church, are but as thorns compared to a Lilly.

Then the Bride speaks, *ver. 3.* she commends the worth of the Bridegroom. As Christ esteems his Church to be as a Lilly among thorns: so she declares Christ to be as the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Forrest. Christ is excellent in himself: comfortable in his shadow or protection, and his fruit was sweet unto her taste. In *ver. 4.* The Spouse sets forth the liberal entertainments which Christ had given her. *He brought me into the banquetting House,* or the house of Wine, according to the Hebrew; which may imply either the Wine-cellar, the place where Wine is kept, or else the Banquetting-house, the place where Wine is drunk. If it be referred to the Wine cellar, then it must be applied to the holy Scriptures, the true Store-house of all spiritual comfort. But I rather understand the house of Wine to be the place where Wine is drunk, understanding thereby that communion that the Church hath with Christ in his Ordinances, and the enjoyment of all Church priviledges, not only for necessity and delight, but even for abundance. As it is said of the Eagle, that she loveth not to eat her morsels alone; so, such is Christs bounty, that he loveth not to be in his banquetting house alone, but brings in his Spouse to the House of Wine, there to refresh her self abundantly.

Then the Spouse sets forth Christs loving protection of her there. *His banner over me was Love.*] The stretching out of this banner over her, denoteth the magnificence of Christs entertainments, and the regality of his protection of her, for de-

Sola non comedit Aquila.

defending her against all danger, and for defiance against all enemies. The Church having now tasted of Christs sweetness, her desire are very suitable to his entertainments. She had *ver. 3.* compared Christ to an Apple-tree, and *ver. 4.* compared his Ordinances to an House of Wine: therefore she cries out in the words of my Text,

Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love.

In which words you have. 1. The Churches importunate desire and longing for a more comfortable refreshment of Christs presence. *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples.* 2. The Reason of this her longing desire. *For I am sick of love.* The Church is sensible of her want of communion with Christ, therefore she is so desirous after him.

CHAP. II.

Hence I note in the first place. That the more a Christian is sensible of the want of Christ, the more vehemently will he desire after him, and after communion with him. A soul that feels the want of Christs seeth him to be altogether lovely, and as he is the only object of love, he is also the only object of desires: He is the Spring head of all perfections, and as they are without mixture of default, so there is nothing in him which is not perfectly desirable. Christs abundance, and mans indigence, are the first links of alliance which we contract with him; he is All, and we are nothing, less then nothing; he is a depth of mercy, and we a depth of misery. The sense of his infinite perfections, and of our numberless imperfections, should make us the more desirous after him; he is all desirable, and we should be all desire. Before Christ was known by the name of the worlds Saviour, he was known by that of the desired of all people. *The desire of all Nations shall come,* Hag. 2. 7. His Prophets honoured him with this title before he was born: and he might more truly (then Daniel) be called *Vir desideriorum*, a Man of desires. Every

Observe.

Christus totus desiderabilis: Homo totus desideria.

soul

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soul that desireth after any thing, is indigent; the soul that desireth, foregoes her self to seek out in another what she finds missing in her self. *Tertullian* hath well expressed the nature of this passion, when he saith, it is the glory of the thing desired, and the shame of him that doth desire: for a thing must be lovely to kindle our desires, it must have charms which may draw us, and perfections which may stay us, but for certain likewise, the Will that doth desire must be indigent, and must stand in need of somewhat which makes it seek out a remedy. The heart of a Christian hath as it were, an infinite capacity, which can only be filled with him who is *summum bonum*, the chiefest Good; it is alwayes empty till it get possession of Christ, all other good things do make it but the more hungry, and not being able to satisfie it, they irritate the desires thereof, but do not appease them: hence it is, as the Philosopher speaks, we cannot limit our desires, but the accomplishment of one begets another, and we run from one object to another, to find him out of whom the rest are all but shadows.

*Desiderium boni
non rei desiderat,
& delectatur
in desiderantis
Tertul. de patient.*

*Infinite concupiscentia
existente; homines
infinite desiderant,
Arist. 1. polit. cap. 6.*

CHAP. III.

Use 1.

THIS shews us the reason why most people do not exercise their thoughts upon Christ, and stretch forth their desires after him, it is because they do not see their need of him for where there is no feeling sense of the want of Christ, there are no earnest desires after him; a man not feelingly sensible of his misery, will not desire after mercy. He that is not feelingly sensible of his condemned condition, will not earnestly desire after a pardon. *If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God*, saith St. James, it is not a particle of doubting whether any man did want wisdom (for who doth not?) but it implies such as want wisdom, and know they want it; let such a one ask it of God. It is very observable that when the sick, the blind and the lame were brought to Christ to be cured of their maladies, he would ask this

James 1. 5.

this or the like questions of them; *Wilt thou be made whole?* John 5. 6. So to the blind man; *What wilt thou that I do unto thee?* Did not Christ see the one man sick, and the other blind, and know well what they wanted? To what end then served such questions? doubtless it was to affect them with the feeling knowledge of their own wants; for it is sense of wants that puts men upon desires of supply. There is a great necessity of our getting a sensible knowledge of the want of Christ.

1. This will make every thing in Christ sweet to us: A full stomach loathes the honey-comb, but to him that is hungry, every bitter thing is sweet: Hunger is the best sauce; it makes every thing to relish the palate well; the heart that is full, loathes Christ, who is sweeter then honey, and the honey-comb it loathes his righteousness, loathes his graces, much more will it loath the Cross of Christ, the reproaches of Christ: But oh how sweet is Christ to him that is pinched with the want of him, and hungers after him! the reproach of Christ is sweet, the Cross of Christ is sweet, the afflictions of Christ are sweet; how sweet were the crumbs that fell from Christs table to the Woman of Canaan? The least hint of salvation, the smallest drop of mercy, a cast of an eye from Christ, any good news or glad tidings from Christ, abundantly refresheth the soul of a Christian in his spiritual wants. Our Saviour took care that the fragments of his broken loaves and fishes should be gathered up; and he will have the least of his mercies to be prized, and none will prize them, but those who are feelingly pinched with the want of them.

2. A feeling sense of the want of Christ, will put us upon importunate desires after him; *Rachels* Shame of barrenness made her cry out, *Give me children, or I die.* *Solomon* saith, *The poor ask many Entreaties.* Slight a beggar, yet he will importune you. Beggars are *humilis importunissimi*, the most importunate men in the World; speak roughly to a beggar, threaten him with a cudgell, yet he will use Entreaties; Oh Sin, have pity on me, I and mine are ready to starve. Thus a man that is pinched with a feeling knowledge of the want of Christ, he will lie at the door of Christ begging for mercy

John 16. 11

Lord I am ready to perish for thirst, O thou who art the fountain of life, refresh me with some living water; I am ready to perish with hunger, feed me with the bread of life. By our sense of the want of Christ we see all that we have, and all that we can do, is from the fulness of Christ, *Of his fulness we all receive, even grace for grace*: of his fulness of love, we receive love: of his fulness of humility, we receive humility: of his fulness of life, we receive life. It is Christs fulness of oyle that keeps our lamps continually burning. The sense of our want of Christ, keeps the heart alwayes in an humble frame, that it doth not pride it self in gifts or graces; the Soul saith, what have I that I have not received from Christ? This will alwayes make us acknowledge our continued dependence upon him.

3. Where men are ignorant of Christ, there is no desire after him. *The whole look not after the Physician, but the sick*: They that conceive themselves sound and well, will neglect the best Physitian in the world: but how welcome is a skilful Physitian to one dangerously sick, and at the point of death: if he hear but of such a ones name, he cries out, Oh send for him, run for him, let him come to me with all speed, or else I am a dead man. Let a Physitian put up his Bills of admirable cures on every post, relating what great cures he hath done upon such and such persons, he hath healed those that were helpless and hopeles, &c. Those that are well, will read over the Note, and the cures, but will not seek to the Physitian. Jesus Christ (the great Physitian of souls) sets up his bills of miraculous cures, sheweth what great cures he hath done; he hath cured the blind and the lame; he hath cast out Devils, healed sinners of all their diseases; he hath healed *Manasses* of his Witchcraft and Sorcery, Murder and Idolatry: he hath healed *Paul* of his Blasphemy and Persecution; healed *Mary Magdalen*, that was possessed of seven Devils: Yea, he makes proclamation to all, that there is no Saviour besides him, there is no such Physitian in heaven and earth that can do such cures as himself. I, even I, am he that healeth all your diseases: I give Manna to the hungry, living water to the thirsty, balm to the wounded, ease and refreshment to the burdened: Men hear of these things, and read of these miraculous cures of mercy,

mercy, but will not seek to him for the cure of their spiritual maladies.

Use 2. Labour then to see a present need of Christ, then will ye be willing to take Christ upon any terms: when guilt of sin and fears of wrath, pursue a man at the heels, when he is upon the top of the ladder, and in his own apprehension, ready to be cast over into the pit of destruction, then he will let all fly, then he will let his dearest lusts, his credit, his estate fly, that he might be able to say, *I am Christ's, and Christ is mine*. Then let Satan, let the world, or his corrupt heart dissuade him and use their most prevalent arguments to keep him from Christ, he will answer all, as *Cæsar* did his Mariners in a storm, dissuading him from venturing on the Waters, *Oportet navigare, non vivere*, I must set sail, though I die: there is more necessity of my sailing, then of my living: So a man fully possessed of his absolute need of Christ, cries out, Christ is the *unum necessarium*, the one thing necessary: tell me not of reproaches, of crosses, of persecutions, of forsaking all, I must have Christ, or I am undone for ever; there is no necessity of shunning these evils, of keeping my lusts, I must have Christ, or I perish eternally.

CHAP. IV.

S*tay me with Flaggons, &c.*] Mark what the Spouse saith, here before my Text; he brought me into his banquetting house or Wine-cellar, and then She cries out, *Stay me with Flaggons, &c.* Hence I note,

That the more we enjoy Christ, and are sensible of the worth of Christ, the more we shall desire after him; none are so eager after Christ, as those that have had most communion with him: Where there is no knowledge of the worth of Christ, there is no desire after him: Swine trample upon pearl, because they know not the worth of pearl: *Gadarens* preferred their Swine above Christ, because they valued them above him. Carnal hearts see no worth and excellency in the Ordinances of Christ, they see no worth in the privileges of Christ, they see no worth in the wayes of

Observ.

Greg. Homil.
Multum deſe-
ruiſt, qui vo-
luntatem ha-
bendi dereli-
quiſt. A ſe-
quentibus tan-
ta relictæ ſunt,
quanta à non
ſequentibus de-
ſiderari poſſunt.

Uſe I.

Attonitus no-
viſate mali, di-
veſq; miſer-
que. Effugere
opiat oper,
et qua modo
voverat odiſſe.
Ovid. Met. 12.
de Mida.

Cui enim offe-
cuto ſatis fuiſt,
quod optami-
nimum vide-
batur? Senec.
Epist. 138.

Chriſt, no glory in grace, no glory in an holy profeſſion, no worth in his people. All that is ſpiritual, is above the ken of a carnal eye, his grace is ſpiritual, his comforts are ſpiritual, his privileges ſpiritual. Carnal hearts judge nothing excellent, but what is pompous. What the world counts excellent, Chriſt calls for a forſaking of, and what the world counts diſhonourable, Chriſt calls for the taking it up. Therefore one of the Fathers ſaid, that the Apoſtles foregoing nothing, had yet foregone very much, ſince they had foregone their own deſires, and that, diſpoſing themſelves of a paſſion, which in their greateſt poverty gave them a right to all riches, they might boaſt to have forſaken all things for Jeſus Chriſt, *Matth. 19* *in the mid*

This ſhews a great difference between earthly and heavenly things: Earthly things are alwayes deſired, when we want them, deſire ceaſeth when we have them: A man that wants bread and drink, and any neceſſaries, oh how he loveth it, when he wants it, and what ſtrength of deſire doth he put forth after it; but when he hath it, and hath taken his fill of it (as the *Iſraelites* did Manna) he ſoon loathes it: All vain faſhions, all ſenſual delights and pleaſures, with which the hearts of the children of men are ſo much taken up, after men have a while taken their fill of them, they ſoon grow weary of them, they ſoon grow ſick of them, though before they were ſick for them: But it is otherwiſe with heavenly things; we love them moſt, when we do enjoy them; and do moſt deſire them, when we have moſt of them. Chriſt is ſo type, that a Chriſtian never thinks he wants him till he doth enjoy him: he is ſo far from thinking he hath too much, that he never thinks he hath enough of Chriſt the more he hath; the more he doth deſire. As for outward things, as to the deſire of them, we are often like that Prince, who repented his having wiſhed for riches, and was afflicted for having obtained them; his deſire became his puniſhment, he abhorred that which he deſired, and finding himſelf poor in the miſt of plenty, he prayed to be delivered from an evil which he himſelf had procured. Abſence of outward good things puts a valuation upon them, and their preſence makes us to deſpiſe them; they appear (as one ſaith) great to our imagination, when they are far off, but when

when they draw nearer, they lose their false greatness; all their advantages vanish away as shadows before the Sun, and we turn our valuation into disesteem, our love into hatred, and our desires into detestation. Blessed are they that still hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness, they shall be satisfied, *Math. 5. 6*. Angels and glorified Saints, though they are full of Christ and of God, yet they desire more of him.

CHAP. V.

I Observe further, that the Sponse is sick of love for Christ, and even fainteth for him in the house Wine: Whence we may learn,

That at the time of special communion with Christ in his Ordinances, our desires should be the more enlarged after him. Our desires in time of holy duty should be as wings to raise us up to God, and as chains to fasten us to him; God hath endowed us with holy desires, only to come by the good which we have not, and which is most necessary for us; they are helps in our necessity, they are (as one observeth) the hands of our will: and as those parts of the body do labour for all the rest, so our desires after Christ do take pains for all the affections of the soul, and do by their diligence the more oblige our love to Christ: our minds should alwayes be holy, but more especially in the time of Gods Worship, for then we come to meet with God; then should we lift up our hearts to God, and mount up to heaven upon the wings of faith, and an holy affection.

Observe.

This may give a check to those that come to the Ordinances of Christ, but do not desire after communion with Christ in his Ordinances: their hearts and thoughts run out after other things. All men desire happiness, and salvation by Christ, who is the object of eternal happiness, but he is below their thoughts, their desires, their endeavours. Their lusts, their pleasures, these earthly and sensual contentments, do swallow up their desires, even then, when they draw near to God in his Ordinances. God complains of such: *My people have committed no evils; They have forsaken me the fountain*

Use.

Jer. 2. 13.

of living waters, a running, streaming, and inexhaustible fountain (a million of creatures cannot draw it dry) yet I am forsaken, I am undesired; I am a forsaken fountain: *They chuse broken cisterns*, that is, creatures which are cisterns, broken cisterns, *that can hold no water*; hold no joy, no comfort, no life; these things are desired, and all run with their pitchers to these broken cisterns. *They have committed two Evils*, saith the Lord, two great evils: it is but one action, yet two great evils, an aversion from God, and an inordinate conversion to the creature: a rejection of an immutable God, and a choice of a mutable creature.

When we come to the Ordinances of Christ, the Lord Jesus bespeaks us, as David did *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 15. *After whom is the King of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?* So Christ saith, you are now come into my presence, and pretend to draw near to me in a more solemn manner than ordinary. *After whom do your desires run out after these dead things, these dead dogs, these fleas, & not after me a living God? What answer will ye make to Christ when he shall put this question to you? What evil didst thou find in me, that thou desiredst me not? How often have I gone about to melt thee with my love, and did but look for thy desires of me, and could not so much as obtain one desire from thee? What will the sad consequence hereof be, but this? Christ will say to such; you have often drawn near to me in my Ordinances, but me you affect not: the Devil, your own sins, and the curse of God have oppressed you: I came to save you, and have given you the means of grace, and made a tender of my willingness to save you in the Gospel: I came to save you out of the hands of your enemies, but you have forsaken me the fountain of life and blessedness: And therefore now what have you to do to take my Word within your mouths, to draw near to me, when your hearts are far from me? Do not such perish justly, who desire not to be saved? Is any pity to be shewn to such that come to Gods Ordinances, and may have Manna, and will not? If they will but desire after after it, they may have it: If such be starved to death, who will pity them? They might have Living-waters, if they would ask after them; but they will not:*

Do

Do not such persons justly perish in their sins? This then may justly check us for the deadness of our desires and affections, when we come to converse with Christ in his Ordinances. Oh did we delight our selves in holy exercises and holy Ordinances, how would they raise our hearts, our desires and affections toward them? This is one end why God hath ordained Ordinances, namely to be as so many steps by which our affections may climb up to heaven; hereby our hearts may have a strong intercourse with God, though our persons be yet so far asunder. Therefore whensoever thou drawest neer to God in any publick or secret duty, let it be in hope to get neerer to God ere thou dost desist: and when you go to read and hear the Word, let it be with this desire and prayer, that thou maist there meet with something that may raise thy affections neerer to God, and give thee a fuller taste of his love in Christ.

CHAP. VI.

Stay me] The Word in the Original is in the plural number; She speaks to her friends and companions: the faithful Ministers of Christ, and other experienced Christians. Stay me with some comfortable Doctrines and promises, and with them comfort and refresh my languishing spirit: the address is not directly to Christ himself: Hence I note,

That the comforts of Christ to fainting Christians are often conveyed by the Ministry of man; he sends forth his Messengers, to whom he gives the tongue of the Learned, that know how to speak a word in season to a wearied soul. This is one end why God hath set up the Ministry, viz. that they may comfort those that are in spiritual distress: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord, *Isaiah 40. 1.*

God will have his people to go to Ministers for comfort, that are men like themselves; and this is one reason why many people go heavy and sad all their dayes, because out of the pride and stoutness of their Stomach, they neglect and scorn to go to others for comfort; they hide their wounds and bleed inwardly, because they are unwilling to lay open their

Observ.

their sores to faithful and learned Ministers, and experienced Christians; though the Lord be the God of all comfort, yet for the most part, he conveyes it to us by the Ministry of man. True it is: God sometimes doth immediately comfort them that are cast down: he can comfort without means, but he doth not: but when means are wanting, when we are debar'd of comforts, then he comforts us in an immediate way; but when means is to be had, when we may have the benefit of the Ministry of the Word, and of the Communion of Saints; then God conveyeth comfort by means: God will not comfort those immediately, that neglect and despise the ordinary means of comfort: hereby God endeareth the affections of people to Ministers, and of one Christian to another; when others can apply comfort to them from their particular case and experience in the like kind: how welcome are the words, and how sweet is the presence of a faithfull Minister and experienced Christian to them?

Use 1.

Heard. Sermon.
in Eph. 4. 30.

Let Ministers and Christians make it their business to comfort fainting souls. It is the office of Ministers to strengthen the diseased sheep of Christ, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken. *Eccl. 3. 1. 4.* It is to be presumed, that God that hath called them to the work, hath fitted them for it. Ministers are better *Read* then private men for the most part are; their Calling leads them to be continually searching the Scriptures, and acquainting themselves with the methods of Satan, and the means how to resist him, and other holy matters which may enable them to be good Soul-Physicians. Therefore let Ministers exercise themselves in cases of conscience, that they may have experience in matters that concern the soul, and be able to apply seasonable comfort to a languishing soul. — Every private Christian, if he hath the Spirit of God, he will in some measure be enabled to comfort others. Two Irons, if they be hot do close together immediately. So, when two godly Christians do meet in love and fervency of affection, how do they heat and warm each other? He that speaks experimentally to another, he speaks so feelingly, so spiritually, so powerfully, with so much evidence and demonstration, and with so much authority to his Brother, that it makes a deep impression upon

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on him. A faithful Minister, and an experimental Christian will go about the work with love, and tenderness of affection. They that know what brokenness of heart for sin is, will be ready to drop in oyle into a wounded Conscience, and to apply comfort to them from their own particular case. I was under the same tentations wherewith you are assaulted; and thus I resisted and overcame them, thus I was delivered from my doubts and fears, such a promise, such a Scripture satisfied me: this or that gave me ease, quickened and comforted me. It is a Spiritual, Divine, and Angelical work to be able to comfort distressed consciences: it is Gods own work, it is he that putteth joy into the heart, *Psalms* 4. 7. He comforteth them that are cast down, he comforteth us in all our tribulation: he affects their hearts with some ravishing sense of his love and favour in Christ. Christ hath undertaken to comfort them that mourn; it is part of his office and work to which he is anointed, *Isaiah* 61. 1, 2, 3. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to comfort, he is stiled *the Comforter*; it is his work to make them cry *Abba Father*, whom he brings into bondage to fear. Angels likewise do comfort: when Christ was in an agony, an Angel came from heaven to comfort him.

2. Hence we may note that our Communion with Christ is furthered by our spiritual converse one with another; the imparting of spiritual gifts and comforts is a great establishment of a weak and fainting heart. *Rom.* 1. 11, 12. Yea it is an establishment of the strongest Christian. *I long to see you*, saith Paul to the Romans, *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established, that is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.* The greatest Apottle may be established by the faith and experiences of the meanest Christian. God is a free Dispenser of his gifts, and hath variously distributed them, that we may be engaged to use his bounty to the good of others, we, as good Stewards of the manifold graces of God, shou'd Minister the same to the use and benefit of our brethren; we should impart to others the quicknings we have received under the Ordinances of God, our refreshings by the promises, our enlargements after prayer, or comforts after soul-abasements; by this means those that are sad and disconsolate, may be edified and comforted.

The Love-sick Spouse.

CHAP. VII.

IN the next place consider, that the Spouse here longs for *Flaggons and Apples*; that is, comforts and graces together: The Spouse being in the banquetting house, cries out, *Stray me with Flaggons*] that is, with Flaggons of Wine; the Jews were wont to distribute at their Feasts and Banquets Wine by Flaggons to their guests. *When David had brought the Ark of God into his own place, and had offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and blessed the people, he dealt to every one a loaf of bread, a good piece of fish, and a flaggon of Wine.* 1 Chron. 16. 3: this is the portion of the Cup sometime mentioned in the Old Testament, because they had a Cup or Flaggon for their refreshment.

Comfort me with Apples.] This is of the same meaning with the former words; *Straw me a bed or boulder*; so the *LXX* renders it: the Hebrew word *Raphad*, signifies to spread abroad a bed or a boulder, as a Couch to lie on: and alludeth to another custome of the Jewes, who used at their Banquets Beds and Couches to stretch themselves upon: So the Church being in the house of Wine, calls for the Wine of heavenly refreshment, and to be bouldered up with spiritual Apples, as one that is in a swooning or fainting fit. *Fernelius* tells us, that Apples are Cordials, and good to comfort the heart and brain, and to prevent swoonings; the Church in her languishing calls for spiritual Apples, for the comforts and graces of the Spirit, with those fruits whereof she had tasted, when she sat down under the shadow of the Apple-tree, *ver. 3.* Therefore *Junius* reads the words here, *Comfort me with those Apples*, as pointing to those sweet entertainments she had, as before mentioned. Hence note further.

That the comforts of Christ, and the graces of Christ, do go together: and the desires of a Christian after the one without the other are not regular. Many would have Christs comforts, that care not for grace and holiness, and neglect to obey his commands; Let me tell thee O Christian, if thou wilt partake of Christs comforts, he will first make thee to feel the weight and burden of sin; none do partake of Christs
sweetness,

Fernel. de Methodo Mendicantibus

Junius in hunc loc.

Observ.

sweetness, but those that have tasted of sins bitterness; Christ will make thee holy, before he will refresh thee with the comforts of his holy Spirit: he will make thee feel some bitterness in sin, for all the pleasure thou hast taken in sin; perhaps thy soul hath wallowed in sinful delights and pleasures for a long season, and now God in a way of justice will drench thy polluted soul in the bitter waters of fears and sorrows. God deals with those he intends truly to comfort, as Physicians deal with those that are in a Lethargy, they cast them into a burning Feaver, that by the burning heat of it, they may dry up and waste those benumbing humours; so the Lord deals with his people that are sick of a spiritual Lethargy, he casteth them into the fire of afflictions, that he may burn up the dross of their corruptions, that he may refine them like silver, and purifie them like gold, and then he restores their souls, and leads them to the waters of comfort.

You that are in spiritual distress, do not yet expect comfort presently; God cometh in a seasonable time: it may be you made Christ wait a long while upon you for your conversion, for your longing and thirsting after him: he hath cryed from heaven to thee many a time, *How long? how long? when shall it once be?* How long will it be ere this hard heart of thine be broken? this proud heart of thine be humbled? how long ere thou wilt begin to enquire and seek after me. O when wilt thou seek me? And it is just with God to make thee cry to him, *how long Lord!* when wilt thou come in, and sup with me, and make thine abode with me, and manifest thy self unto me? When wilt thou give me to drink of the waters of life? May not the Lord say of thee, as of the barren fig-tree? *These three years came I seeking fruit, and found none:* and may not God justly requite thee, and say, now for these many years thou shalt seek me, ere I will be found of you: I waited a long time for the fruits of thy repentance, and now thou shalt wait a while for the fruit of my mercy: Because thou hast rejected the Lord tendering himself to thee, therefore now he stands at a distance from thee: many proffers did he make to thee, but thou slightedst them; many calls thou hast

from him, and wouldst not hear them; many knocks hath he given at the door of thy heart, and begged for entrance, but thou keptst thy heart shut still against him. ⁴Is it not equiry that God should suffer thee to lie at the door of mercy awhile knocking before he opens to thee? Shall the great God wait on thee, and thou not wait upon him? Brethren! God will humble us for our delayes, as well as for our other sins, he will humble us for the neglect of his profers, for the refusal of his grace so long; he will humble thee for thy Stubbornness, for thy pride, for thy contempt and forgetfulness of him, and then he will comfort thee in his own time and way.

CHAP. VIII.

IT is further to be noted, that the Spouse here cries out *Stay me with Flaggons.* Give me not a sip or a draught, but whole flaggons. Hence we may observe,

Observ.

That a soul that thirsteth after Christ is contented with no small measures of Christ. *Dives* in Hell-torments calls but for a drop of water to cool his flaming tongue, and the Spouse in the banquetting house calls for Flaggons of wine: our requests are many times too modest in Spiritual things, and our prayers do come short of the Returns of them. *Solomon* only begs wisdom of God, and the Lord not only gives him what he asketh, but together with it gives him riches and honour and glory: *He gives us more then we can ask or think.* Ephes. 3. 20.

Use 1.

Try whether ye have these ardent desires after Christ, so as you cannot be content with a little of him. I shall shew you, who they are that go without these Apples and Flaggons, these living cordials, and yet do desire after Christ. There are six kinds of successles desires after Christ.

1. Occasional desires of Christ: Some have but fits or pangs of desires, occasioned by some pang of fear or terrour, as by some loss, cross, sickness, or fear of death: when the fire of Hell flasheth in a mans face, then he will have a flash of desires; when he is under the fear of death, then Oh that I had

had Christ, as *Eſau* longed for pottage, and then said of his birth-right, *I am at the point to die, and what good will this Birth-right do me?* Such longings will some men have after Christ; I am at the point of death, what good will creature-comforts do me. O give me of these living cordials; Stay me with spiritual Flaggons, comfort me with these Apples. When God raiseth up a Storm in the polluted consciences of sinners, this may put them into a fit of devotion, as it did the Mariners in *Jonah*; but these desires usually vanish away with the occasion; but let the Sea be calmed, and the waves still, you shall see the prophane Mariner fall to his prophaneſs again.

2. Disproportionable desires are successles desires; when Christ is not desired, *in quantum est appetibilis*. some part of Christ is desired only: Christ justifying, but not Christ sanctifying; Christ taking away the guilt of sin, but not Christ dividing and divorcing the lust from the soul; they would have these flaggons to quench their thirst, to refresh them, when they are scorcht with the fears of he'l, but care not to be washed in the waters of life and holiness; Men desire Christ to save them, but will not have him to reign over them; like those seven women, *Iſa. 4. 1.* that shall take hold of one man, saying, *We will eat our own bread; and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach:* So these men will take hold of Christ, yet they say, *We will take our own courses: we will live as we list, only let us be called by thy Name: and take away our reproach from us:* Thus men do in their desires divide Christ.

3. Selfish or carnal desires of Christ are without success: when men desire not Christ for Christs sake, but for some temporal or carnal advantage to themselves, as the Jews did follow Christ up and down by Sea and Land in City and desert. Multitudes would follow him, but their following him but selfish; Christ therefore upbraids them for it: *You seek me for the loaves:* so the Scribe *Matth. 8.* was very desirous to be one of Christs followers; *Master, I will follow thee where-soever thou goest:* but he thought to get some great preferment by him; but when Christ tells him that the *Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath*

hath not whereon to lay his head : It is thought by all Interpreters, that this forward man forsook Christ ; he saw more danger of parting with his estate for Christ, and his outward comforts by following him, then he had hopes of preferment by him, therefore he will be none of his followers. It was an old complaint ; *Multi querunt Jesum, sed non propter Jesum*, many seek after Jesus, but not for Jesus sake ; if they can be gainers by him, they will have him, but are unwilling to be sufferers and losers for Jesus sake.

One of the Popes, when he was a Monk, would often say, *Panis & aqua est vita beata* ; But when he was Pope, he said, *Aqua & panis, est vita canis.*

4. Mutable desires are successles desires ; the desires of many men change as their estate and condition changeth ; Ebbing desires after Christ, when prosperity is in the flow, and flowing desires when prosperity is in the ebb : in a gloomy day of War Christ is desired, but not regarded in a time of peace, in a time of sickness then Christ is longed for, then the sick man will pray, and the Minister must pray Christ into his heart, but let God renew his health, his desires die and languish in him : *Moses* and *Aaron* must go and seek the Lord for *Pharaoh*, when any plague was upon him and his land, but let God take it away, then *Moses* must see his face no more ; it is death so to do : When men are in Adversity, then none but Christ ; but let their conditions be changed, there will be a change of their desires.

4. Preposterous desires of Christ are successles desires ; when Christ is not desired chiefly, and in the first place, First, These things, then the Kingdome of Heaven : first the World, then Christ. All the things of the world are nothing in comparison of Christ : Why then do we set our eyes upon that which is not? *Prov. 23. 5.* These things are not the true blessedness ; in them true happiness doth not consist : They are not bread, they cannot satisfy us : They are not necessary, there is but one thing necessary, that is, Christ : yet this is the course of world, most mens desires are after the things of this life, and they never turn the stream and bent of their affections, till they are ready to drop into the grave : we may say of late desires, as we do of late repentance, they are seldome true, and by consequent seldome obtain Christ. Many men are of the mind of a certain Duke of

of *Russia*, who being asked, whether he had seen the Blazing Star in the air, answered no, I have so much to do, saith he, here upon earth, that I have no time to look up to heaven.

6. Unactive and lazy desires after Christ are without success; the Schoolmen term these desires, *velleitates*, not *volitiones*, which cannot be better Englished, then by this, fain I would, but loath I am; fain I would have Christ, but loath I am to take pains for him, or to do, or suffer, or part with any thing for him. Men of lazy desires, are like the dry and chapt earth, it gapes and yawns for rain, but moveth not; so many men yawn for Christ, but if God will not drop him into their mouths, they will not stir one foot for him, a slothful man desireth, and hath not: He desireth Christ, and mercy, but hath them not, *Prov. 21. 25. The desire of the slothfull killeth him*; he resteth in his desires, and in his wishes for Christ, thinking he doth well, if he desire Christ, though he labour not at all for him.

CHAP. IX.

6. Properties of true desires after Christ.

NOW that ye may see what it is truly and fervently to desire after Christ, I shall lay down these six Properties of true desires after Christ.

1. They are most importunate desires: therefore in Scripture they are compared to the strongest desires, as to the Harts panting after the Water-brooks, *Psal. 42. 1. As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so doth my soul pant after thee, O God.* It is compared to the longings of pregnant Women: my soul longeth, *verecunde, desiderate*, as some translate from the Hebrew word in *Psal. 84. 2.* with a bashful and modest kind of wishing, and *Psal. 119. My soul fainteth for thy salvation*: It even pineth away with longing: these desires are also compared to hunger and thirst, both are importunate desires: *Oh that one would give me to drink of the water at the well of the gate of Bethlehem, said David: a Kingdome for a cup of water, said Cræsus and Lysimachus.*

simachus in their thirst. Those who truly desire Christ, will be at the door of Gods grace and will never give him rest night nor day till God give them Christ.

2. They are such desires which nothing can satisfie but the proper object, even Christ Jesus; and in this respect compared to hunger and thirst, which desires are satisfied with nothing, but by their proper objects: Offer Gold and Silver, and no Bread to an hungry man; he saith, Give me Bread. What good will Gold do me, if I have no Bread? Offer such a soul that thirsteth after Christ, (as the Devil did to Christ) the glory of all the Kingdomes of the world; and he will say, what good will all this do me? I must have Christ. Wicked mens desires after Christ are like childrens crying for a peece of gold, when they see it, they will make a great cry; but give them an Apple, and that stills them: they have their fits of longing after Christ, but give them golden Apples they are content; their desires after Christ are like *Sauls* Evil Spirit, a little Musick on the Harp will lay their desires flat again.

3. They are such desires as are proportionable to Christ, whole Christ is the adæquat object of their desires, in *quantum est appetibile*. Such men cry out, O let Christ justifie me, renew me, sanctifie me; Grace is as much desired, as pardon of sin; holiness as much desired as mercy: let me have Christ to rule over me, and govern me, let him be my all in all: *Thy Law* (saith *David*) *is my delight*; that holy, strict commanding Law, that presseth men to that which is most contrary to their lusts, is his desire and delight. The wicked can say, Lord thy mercies are my delight, thy comforts, thy joy, thy salvation, are my delight, but not thy word, nor thy holiness: let Christ be presented to him that truly desireth him any way, he cries out, O give me Christ upon any terms, give me the crosse, so I may have Christ, tell him of forsaking all, he cries out, Farewell all things that I may win Christ.

4. They are constant desires; such a man longs for Christ at all times, he longs for Christ as earnestly in health as in sickness, in time of serenity, as in time of eminent danger, in time of peace, as in time of trouble, prosperity dullieth not his desires.

5. They

5. They are such desires as are accompanied with an holy impatience of delay; delays do not dull, but quicken a Christians desires after Christ; in this respect they are also compared to hunger and thirst, which are impatient of delay. Tell a thirsty man, he shall have drink the next week, he is impatient; O saith he, I must have it now, I may be dead before that time: so let Christ go to put off such a soul; he saith, I will not be so put off, Oh give me Christ now, else I may be eternally undone: How long Lord, how long? Do not stand off for ever; Gods momentary delays are accounted Eternal with a soul that ardently desireth after Christ; one day is as a thousand years in his account.

6. They are such desires as carry a man through all difficulties whatsoever: hunger will break through stone-walls, so will hunger after Christ break through the greatest difficulties that lie in the way: When David cried out, Oh that one would give me to drink of the waters of *Beth-lehem*, three of his Worthies hearing of it, charged through an Army of Philistines, to fetch him some of that water. Oh that one would give me to drink of these spiritual Flaggons, saith a soul that thirsteth strongly after Christ. Tell him of Bears and Lions, Bonds and Imprisonments in the way, yet through them all he will go, that he may drink his fill out of these flaggons; but the sloathful man saith, *There is a Lion in the way*, and so goeth not forth at all.

7. They are most industrious desires: and indeed according to a mans industry, so are his desires after Christ; to this purpose consider,

1. That true desires do put a man upon the diligent use of all appointed means to obtain Christ; the Spouse in this Book of *Canticles* was restless, till she found him whom her soul loved; she ran up and down the Streets, charged every one she met with, to tell him she was sick of love: a man that truly desireth Christ, will run from duty to duty, from Ordinance to Ordinance, and is very earnest to see whether he can find Christ there; lazy desires separate the means from the end, they desire Christ, but neglect the means, neglect the Ordinances which are *vehiculum Christi*.

2. True desires do put a man upon the diligent improve-

ment of all opportunities: as a thriving Tradesman layes hold on all advantages and opportunities: if he hath an opportunity of doing, or receiving good, he doth not omit it.

3. It puts a man upon constant endeavours, not for a fit or a start, or for a Mood in a good humour, but it is his constant work to make sure of Christ; as they say of the labour of an Husbandman, it is *labor actus in orbem*, his work is never at an end, so it is with him that truly longeth for Christ.

4. Right desires do put a man upon present endeavours after Christ; he will not (like the sluggard in the Proverbs) cry, *Yet a little more slumber, &c.* so damnation may seize upon him like an armed man, as poverty did upon *Solomons* sluggard; but no sooner are these holy desires wrought in the heart of a faithful Christian, but they put him instantly upon seeking after Christ; he cries out presently to his own lazy heart, awake O my soul, and seek out for Christ, lest thou perish eternally.

CHAP. X.

I Now come to consider the reason of the Churches importunate thirsting after Christ, *For I am sick of love.* Love, where it is strong causeth a fainting or languishing desire toward the thing beloved. Love, is of all other the most inward and visceral affection; therefore called by the Apostle, The bowels of Love: We read of the yearnings of *Josephs* bowels over *Benjamin*, his Mothers-Son, and of the true Mother over her child: *incaluerunt viscera*, they felt an agitation of their bowels. Love, the more vehement it is, doth work the more sudden and sensible decay and languishing of Spirits, as *Amnon* is said out of wanton love to wax lean from day to day, and to grow sick for *Tamar*, *King. 2. 13.* So here in Spiritual love you have the like expression: *O give me Wine to exhilarate, and Apples to refresh those spirits, that were as it were wasted and melted away by an extream out-let of love;* Hence I note,

That true love carrieth out the soul after Christ with such vehem.

vehemency, that it is even sick for the want of Christ : affections when they are strong, will work disquiet, when they obtain not what they are earnestly set upon; when love is hindered, it causeth a soul-sickness.

In handling of this point, I will first shew what Love to Christ is,

Love to Christ is a supernatural grace wrought in the soul of a Christian by the spirit of God, through the knowledge of God in Christ and faith, whereby we delight in Christ, desire Union and Communion with him, with well unto him, and rest upon him as the chiefest good; where you have,

1. The nature of it, It is a supernatural vertue: I call it a supernatural and heavenly love, to distinguish it from other kinds of love: there is a natural love, which is naturally imprinted in us, fastening us to those objects that are delightful to us; this love is between Father and Child, Husband and Wife, &c. There is a sensible love seated in the lower part of the soul, and hath so much commerce with the senses, from whence it borroweth its name, as it alwayes makes impression upon the body, and this it is which is properly termed passion. There is a sensual and carnal love, which may rather be called a fury then love: there is worldly love, when men are lovers of riches, honours, pleasures, more then of Christ: there is an immoderate self-love, when men love their ease, credit, profit, life, more then Christ: Yea, many that pretend they love their friends, they love them not so much for any vertue they observe in them, as for the good they hope to reap by them. Observe a man transixed with any violent love, you shall find a man whose mind is bewitched, whose wit and reason is Ecclipsed; all he beholds, thinks, and talks of, is the object of his love: but love to Christ is of a supernatural excellency, it is a ray of Christs own love, therefore he calls it, his love, *Continue ye in my love*, John 15.

Ista quam tu describis, negotiatio est, non amicitia, quae ad commodum ascendit. Senec. Epist. 9.

2. The efficient or worker of it, is the Spirit of God, we have it not from Nature, but from the Spirit: love is one of fruits of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22*. Neither have we it from custom, as Philosophers speak: neither is it gotten by art or industry: *It is shed abroad upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost in us*, *Rom. 5. 5*. *Love is of God, and every one that loveth*

is born of God, 1 John 4. 7. Now it is above the power of corrupt nature to love Christ.

3. The object of this love is Jesus Christ; the Spouse calls Christ, *him whom her soul loved*, Cant. 3. Christ is the object, who is the Author of this love. The objects of other loves are many times faulty and vicious; Loves fancy may err in chusing an evil object, but here it is not so; for God and Christ are the only objects of this love.

4. The grounds of this love; that, is, through the knowledge of God in Christ and faith:

1. Through the knowledge of God in Christ: there must be a knowledge of Gods love to us, before we can love him: for as a stone that lies in the bowels of the earth, is not hot, till it be out of the earth, and the Sun first shine upon it: so we cannot love God, till we first know his love toward us; for our love is rather an effect, then a cause of his love, *We love him because he loved us first*, 1 John 4. 19. and we love not him, till he hath first loved us: If a man will love God in Christ, he must first know God in Christ; for our love to him is grounded upon our knowledge of God in Christ.

2. A second ground of this love is faith, there must be faith to believe the remission of our sins, and that Christ loveth us in particular, before we can truly love him. *The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*, 1 Tim: 1. 5. So that true love to Christ must spring from faith.

Object. But it may be said, that the woman in the Gospel, had many sins forgiven her, because she loved much, Luke 7. 47. Here was her love first, then follows the remission of her sins.

Sol. The word [*Because*] doth not note out the cause of pardon, but only a sign that her sins were pardoned. You are to understand it thus; it appeared that many sins were forgiven her, because she loved much; such a man is *deserving* a lover of God, because *deserving* beloved of God; he loveth much, because much is forgiven. This crosseth the opinion of the Papists; they say, Love is the form of faith; for they make a double love, one without faith, and such a wicked man may

may have; another with faith, and such a wicked man cannot have.

Object. But they obj. & That which gives the operation to faith, is the form of faith : but love gives the operation to faith ; *In Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love*, Gal. 5. 6. where love (say they) gives the operation to faith : *Ergo* love is form of faith.

Resp. Love gives the operation of faith, not *quà causa*, sed *quà instrumentum* ; not as the cause, but as the instrument : Love is not the cause of faiths operation, but love is the instrument in its operation.

Object. But S. James saith, *As the body without life is dead, so faith without works is dead*, James 2. 26. therefore love which makes faith to work, gives life to it, and is the form of it.

Sol. The works of faith, as love, &c. do shew there is faith, as the Spirit shews there is a soul: if works were not, there would appear to be no true faith.

Object. That which doth perfect faith, is the form of faith ; but works, as love and other vertues do perfect faith, James 2. 22. *By works was Abrahams faith made perfect.*

Resp. Works do perfect faith, not *in actu primo*, sed *in actu secundo* ; not in regard of the first act, but in regard of the second, as a tree is said to be perfected by the fruit ; not that the fruit gives the essence to the Tree, but the fruit sheweth that it is a perfect Tree.

5. The effects of this love follow.

1. Hereby we do delight in God ; this sheweth, wherein true love consisteth. There is alwayes a delight and complacency in the thing beloved ; we read in this book of the *Canticles*, of the *bed of love* : the soul of a believer reposeth it self in Christ, as in a bed of Roses : therefore his love is grounded upon Experience ; he loveth God exceedingly, as best deserving love above all other, *Magnes amoris amor* : Love, we say, is the Loadstone of love ; they easily delight most in him, of whom they find themselves most beloved. A carnal man saith, he loves Christ, but doth not delight in him, he pretendeth to love him, but doth not like him, Christ

Christ is not an object suitable to his crooked heart; therefore he often picks a quarrel with Gods dealings, as if God were engaged to him for his love: he excepts against Gods Providence, as if it were too partial, for giving too much to others, too little to himself: He takes Exceptions against the Law of God, as if it were too strict, for tying him up from seeking his own pleasures on the Lords day, and at no time suffering him to make provision for the flesh. Can any man love Christ truly, unless he delight in him? Who can love his Prince, and dislike his Laws, his Government? Who can love his Image, that delighteth not in his person? nay, where there is dislike upon dissimilitude, there can be no true love; affection cannot subsist, nor be constant without judgement, nor love without conformity; now where there is true love, there is a delight in Christ, and a constant affection toward him.

*Amor, est unio
amantis ad
amatum;*

2. It makes a man desire to be united to Christ, to enjoy the comfortable presence of Christ, to have fellowship and communion with him. Love is a desire of Union to the person-beloved. Upon the affection and liking that we take of Christ, it will beget a desire in us to possess and enjoy him: Fruition is that which love seeks, it is never at rest, till it can joyn it self to the object that it loveth; till it gets to enjoy and possess it: some have therefore resembled love unto fire; whatsoever you cast into the fire, it is the property of fire to assimilate it, to transform it into its own nature and likeness; such is the operation of love, it transforms a man into the nature of that which he loveth; if it be a fleshly object that he loveth, it makes him carnal; if earthly, it makes him earthly; if heavenly, it makes him heavenly.

*Coësset. Tabul.
human, passion.*

3. It makes a man wish well to Christ: the honour of Christ is more dear to him then all the world, than his own life, yea, then his own salvation, as *Moses* could have been even contented to have been blotted out of the Book of life, then that Christ should be dishonoured. One defineth Love thus: Love is a well-wishing, which we relieve with all our power to those to whom we are united, procuring them for their own sakes all the good we think may give them content.

content. The son of *Antigonus* being sick, and none knowing what he ailed; the Physician discovered the cause of it to be his love to his Mother-in-law; for still as she came into his presence, his pulses fell to beat extraordinarily. Thus in our love of Christ, when we see any thing done which makes for the honour of Christ, it will make our spirits to exult, and our hearts to leap within us. On the other side, when we see his holy name prophaned and dishonoured, his Sabbaths defiled, his Ordinances contemned, this will fill a man that loveth Christ, with an holy indignation, burst his heart with grief, and force his tongue to speak for the honour of him whom his soul loveth. You have heard of the son of King *Cresus*, that was born dumb, and never spake word in all his life; yet in the Battel, when he saw the life of his Father in danger, the string of his tongue suddenly burst asunder, then he cryed to the Enemy to save him, it was the King that he fought withall. As it was with him, when he saw the life of his Father endangered; so it is with him that truly loves Christ, when he sees the holy Name of God to be dishonoured, it goes to his heart to see it, and makes him break through all resistances of nature, and speak then for the honour of Christ, though he never speak more.

4. The soul resteth upon Christ as the chiefest good; rest is the utmost end that love seeks after, and having gotten it, it rejoyceth in it without end. It is so in Gods own love, where he loveth, he doth after a sort *acquiesce*: he doth rest pleased and satisfied with it, *Matth. 3. ult.* where speaking from heaven, and testifying of his beloved son, he saith, *Hic est filius meus dilectus*, and what he meant by it, the following words do declare; *in quo mihi complaceo*, or *in quo acquiesco*, in whom I am well pleased, or do rest satisfied: that is the sweet effect that love hath: where it obtains fruition, it receiveth full satisfaction. Other objects do not satisfie us, and no wonder! they be flying and transitory. What certain aim can a man take when he shoots at a flying Fowl? Such be all terrestrial objects, when we aim at them, and hope to catch them, as *Solomon* speaks of riches, they take the wings of an Eagle, and fly away from us: Je-
sus

us Christ is an object more continuing, and therefore gives more contentment. In setting our loves upon him we find rest and peace : it is not so when we set our hearts upon other things, our hearts are then full of restless agitations and motion. The inferiour part of the elementary Region that is toward the earth, is the seat of Winds and Tempests ; but the upper part that is toward Heaven, that is ever said to be calm and peaceable ; in like sort are our hearts and souls, when the love of them doth propend toward these inferiour and earthly things, they be full of unquiet agitations, tempestuous and troublesome ; but when they be higher raised, viz. to Christ and Heaven-ward, then they be calm and quiet ; there is rest, peace, solace, satisfaction, and abundance of tranquillity.

CHAP. XI.

IN the second place, I shall shew what this Love-sickness is, and whence it ariseth.

Love-sickness is a strong impulsio of love in the soul after Christ, and a most vehement thirsting after him, upon the sense of the want of him. It is observable, that in this Book of *Solomons Song*, the Spouse is said twice to be sick of love ; once in the absence of Christ, once in his presence. In his absence, when the Watchmen that went about the City smote her, and wounded her, and the Keepers of the walls took away her vail from her, then she chargeth the Daughters of *Jerusalem* thus, *go tell my beloved, if ye find him, that I am sick of love.* Here likewise, in the house of Wine she is also sick of love : there is an excitation of vehement affections to Christ sometimes through the absence of Christ, sometimes in his presence ; the one is the sickness of hope, the other the sickness of desire ? *Hope deferred* (saith the wise man) *makes the heart sick*, and desires not fully satisfied do cause a languishing in the soul ; when Christ is either wholly withdrawn from the soul, or the soul hath but a partial enjoyment of him, it causeth this spiritual sickness. The want of the thing beloved is a grievous torment to the lover,

lover, *Dauids* desire of enjoying God was such, that it was even his death, as it were to want God, it holds forth as *Pagnin* observeth, that *Dauids* soul either extreemly desired the Lord, or even died upon the absence of God. There is a kind of holy *Antiperistasis*, a strong desire after Christ occasioned through the sense of his absence, as we are hottest in seeking after precious things when they are absent, and furthest from our enjoyment; absence sets love on fire: The impression of Christs kisses, of his spiritual embracings, and of his patient knockings at the door of the soul, the print of his footsteps, the remainders of the smell of his precious oynments, his shadow when he goes out of doors, are coals to enflame the soul; then is a Christians love to Christ strongest, his bowels move, the smell of his love, like sweet smelling myrrhe is very sweet and piercing. The Antients in their Hieroglyphicks painted Love with a Gate or Window in his Stomack, wherein were written these two word; *procul & propè*; as far off, and at hand, to shew that he that is a lover, loveth as well in absence as in presence, or rather his love burneth more strongly, when he is absent from his beloved. *As the Hart panteth for the water brooks, so my soul panteth for thee O God*, saith David, Psal. 42. 1, 2. *My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God*. No Beast is more thirsty by nature, than the Hart is; and the Learned observe, it is the female kind, whose passions are more violent than the Males: it is as if one should say, no Hart nor Hind can thirst more after waters, than his soul did after God; and the word [*panting*] is to be observed, by which David sheweth, that he did not only work himself out of breath to enjoy God; but also the little breath he had, he spent it in breathing after God; yea, that he might shew his vehement desire, he again repeats it, *My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God*. Moreover, he sheweth his vehement grief for the want of Gods presence, *My tears have been my meat and drink continually*; as if he had said, such abundance of tears fell from him, that he might be said to feed upon them. It is an Hell upon earth to be deprived of the presence of God in his Ordinances, for what is the chief-

est part of Hell, but an eternal loss of Gods glorious presence! and as the damned shall weep and wail for ever, because they shall never enjoy God, so the gracious soul will weep and wail as long as he is deprived of God in his Ordinances here upon earth.

CHAP. XII.

Use 1.

IS there such a vehement love in some Christians, that they are sick of love for Christ? then here you may see the cause, why Churches at their first plantation, and Christians at their first conversion, are wont to be raised up to an extraordinary zeal for God, it is because Christ hath shed abroad his love into their hearts, and love makes them so zealous as they are: Indeed carnal men stand wondering at so great a change that is wrought in a Christian, that he doth not now run with others to the same excess of riot. Many in *Jerusalem* were astonished at *Paul*, that he in so short a time was so zealous for Christ, that a little before was so mad against him, that he was now become a preacher of that faith which before he persecuted: what was it that wrought so effectually upon his heart: it was the love of Christ. *The love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. 5. 12. there was a strong and secret compulsion upon the spirit of *Paul*, that he could not chuse but be so affectionate toward Christ and his truth; and else where he saith, *We can do nothing against the truth, but all for the truth: we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.*

Use 2.

Try the strength of your Love to Jesus Christ; there are many that pretend they are greatly in love with Jesus Christ, that are but feigned Lovers; therefore I shall give you the properties of this vehement love to Christ.

1. It is a transcendent love: such a man loves Christ above all other things; he can look upon all things with *Paul*'s dross and dung in comparison of him, he desireth nothing else

else in comparison of him. *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee ?* Psalm 73. 25. God and he only was the object of his desire ? *whom have I in heaven but thee ?* Is not glory and happiness, joy and peace in heaven ? is there not a Crown of righteousness, a Crown of immortality and glory there ? are not these things desirable ? Is not the sight of, and fellowship with Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect desirable ? no, these are not the things which *David* desireth in heaven, it is God only that he thirsteth for, let me have God, and I have all things, without God and Christ, even heaven it self is not heaven : so upon earth, are there not riches and honours, and many other desirable things : no, saith he, there is nothing on earth that I desire besides thee. Vehement love to Christ, drives away a Christians love to other things, as the flower of the Vine dissipates Serpents. An ancient Lover said, that Love had made a Butt of his heart, where as soon as it had shot all its arrows, it threw it self as an enflamed dart into the bottom of his breast, to set him all on fire. I have read of another, that was so full of love to Christ, that when he saw an Epistle or Letter, wherein the name of Jesus was not premised, it much tormented him, saying *Saracens* had more devotion for *Mabomet* a man of sin, setting his name in the front of their Letters, then Christians had for their Redeemer : some took delight to ask him many questions : From whence comest thou ? he answered, *from love* : Where dwellest thou ? *in love* : Whom seekest thou ? *after my love* : he answered them nothing, but the word Love. You may set bounds and limits to your love to the world, to friends, to one another, but who can express the greatness of his affection to Christ, who is sick of love for him ? *Love knoweth no reverence, what it loveth, it loveth, and it knoweth nothing else ; Take all from me O Lord, so thou leave me thy self,* saith *St. Augustine*.

*Amor nescit,
reverentiam,
quod amat,
amat, & aliud
novit nihil.
August.*

2. It is an elevating and transporting love. Mens hearts, thoughts and discourses are upon the objects of their love : If a Woman love her husband, she is ever thinking and talking of him in the time of his absence : Absence is a short

*Servat. de usu
passion.*

*Extasim facit
amor, amatores
suo sta u di-
morit, sui juris
esse non sinit;
sed in ea que
amat penitus
transfert.*

*Dionys de di-
vini nominib.
cap. 4.*

*Diuplicibus de-
sideriis nemo
incedere potest.*

death, which entails upon us as much sorrow, as the presence of the beloved giveth satisfaction: Talk with a man that is Love-sick, you talk with a man that is not at home; with a man that is absent from himself; the soul is more where it loveth, then where it dwelleth; a man that is Love-sick for Christ, he passeth through his ordinary employments and doth scarce heed them, he passeth through the world as a man at randome, he regards not the things of the world, for Christ is gotten into his heart, and draws up all his affections to himself. Take a man that is sick for any earthly thing, whether of *Ahabs* sickness, (who was sick for *Naboths* Vineyard) or of *Ammons* sickness, who wasted his Spirit in an impure flame, burning in lust toward his Sister *Tamar*: that which the soul is sick for, it daily dreams, thinks and talks of it; so the soul that is sick of love for Christ, will be as it were extasied and deaded to the things below, and be wholly taken up with Jesus Christ: He wisheth that all the parts of his body were turned into tongues to praise him, or into an heart to love him; he seemeth to torment himself that there are given to him, two hands to act, two eyes to see, two ears to hear, two feet to walk, and but one heart to love: he doth not prescribe any bounds to his love: he is troubled, that Gods greatness is so well known, his goodness is no more loved, and that having so many subjects, he hath no more that love him: he doth not prescribe any bounds to his love to Christ, but makes it his sole desire, and wishes that his heart were dilated, that he might infinitely love him (if it might be) who is infinitely lovely.

3. It is a pure and Virgin Love, Cant. 1. 3. 4. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy Name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee:* it is a chaste love, not an adulterous love, a love of Christ for himself, and for his own sake, for the savour of his precious ointments during the state of innocence, man had no love save only for God, and nature was so well tempered with grace, as that all her inclinations were holy: in this happy state, holy love and self-love were as it were the same thing, but since mans disobedience, his love altered nature, and he that lookt up-

on

*Modus amandi
Christum sine
modo.
Bern.*

on the glory yf God and his own good with the same eye, began to separate them, and forgetting what he owed unto God, he even made a God of himself; but now for a remedy of this mischief, Jesus Christ is come into the world to banish self-love from our souls, for as one well noteth, his coming, had no other motive; nor his doctrine any other end, then the ruine of this dreadful monster; and he admits of no disciples, who have not changed their self-love into an holy aversion; a man cannot therefore be a good Christian, nor can he have any strong affections to Christ, who doth too excessively love himself. Dost thou love Christ for himself, or for the loaves? Dost thou find a sweetness in his person, in his doctrine, in his offices, in his death, blood, mediation, resurrection and ascension, dost thou love him for himself, and not for any carnal respects, then is thy love a pure and unmixt love?

4. It is an obedient love: *If you love me, keep my commandments* saith Christ, *John 14. 15*, The greatest demonstration of our love to Christ, is the love that we bear to his commandments. *David* cries out, *Ob how I love thy Law: I love it above gold*. Many there are now a dayes, that profess much love to Christ, yet think themselves loose from his commandments: but certainly, he that doth not look on Christ as a Law-giver, as well as a Saviour, doth not love him: Indeed nothing will so enable a man to keep the commandments of Christ as Love will do. *This is love, and his commandments are not grievous*: therefore saith *Austin*, Love never finds difficulties: the reason why men object difficulties is want of love. Love neither frames, nor accepts of excuses, love finds no difficulties which it overcomes not: love charmeth troubles, mingleth pleasures with pains, and to encourage us against all difficulties, finds out inventions to make them either pleasing, or less troublesome to us. The troubles of men, that love Christ vehemently, are never troublesome, and they never find pain in serving him whom they love, or if they do, they cherish it.

Nulla modo sunt onerosi labores amanti-um; interest ergo quid amatur; nam in eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut amatur. labor August.

5. It is a love that swalloweth up all other loves whatsoever. There are three sorts of love; one ever good, the other

other ever bad; the third of its own nature good, but accidentally made bad: and that which is ever good is this love to Christ, which I am now speaking of; that which is ever bad, is the love of sin: that which is of its own nature good, but accidentally made bad, is the love of those things which we may lawfully affect, but we offend in them when we love them disorderly or excessively; now this love to Christ swallows up the other loves; for the one of them it quencheth and quite extinguisheth it, even as water quencheth fire; there can no evil motion come into the heart; but if the love of Christ be there it will chase it out, not at all giving it any place of rest or residence; and for the other love, it helps to order and rectifie that too, teaching a man, if he love any such thing, yet to love it in due manner, and in due measure, not preferring his love of that above him, for whose sake only he must love it: be it parents or children, husband or wife, or friend, be it credit, pleasure, or profit, ease, health life; be it what it will be, the love of Christ ruling in our heart, will so qualifie and moderate the love of these things, that it will make it hold its due place and proportion, ever reserving the predominance to him, whom all creatures must serve: chiefly it teacheth us, that as God is to be loved for his own sake, so all other things for his sake, and therefore in an inferiour and secondary place: Christ must be loved *first of all, and most of all, first in time, and first in place*; many begin to look toward Christ and heaven, when they can look no way else; they serve sin, the Devil, the world first, and themselves also before God, reserving only the furrows and wrinkles of their old age for God, but true Love honoureth Christ with its first fruits; it gives God (as I may so speak) the Maiden-head of its love; it serves him first, and none else before him. — And as first in time, so first in place also; it lets God have the first and best place, it lets him have the highest and chiefest room in the heart; it gives the priority to none else, sets none before him, none equal with him; That which I make my love, I make my God: therefore covetous men are called Idolaters; they make a God of

of their money, though not because they offer sacrifices to it, yet because their hearts and affections are set upon it; the world hath more from them than God hath; but a man that loveth Christ, reserveth the first and the fattest for Gods use—— And as such a one loveth Christ first of all, so likewise most of all, as primarily, so totally; he divides not his love betwixt Christ and others: *Pharaoh* would have had the *Israelites*, to have left their Cattle behind them, when they desired leave of him to go and sacrifice in the Wilderness, but what saith *Moses*? *non remanebis ungula*, there shall not an hoof be left behind: so when Satan would perswade a lover of Christ, not to give all to God, but to leave something behind for him, and his service; he answereth him no; there shall not an hoof stay behind; he that hath given us all, shall command, and have all. One of these two that entered into the land of *Canaan* was *Calib*, and *Philo* the Jew etymologizing his name saith, it was *quasi Col-leb*, which in the Hebrew signifies all heart, thereby teaching us, that Christ must have all our heart, all must be given to him, if we will enter into the heavenly *Canaan*.

Philo Jud.

6. This Love is such as being placed upon its object, the Lord Jesus, it will not be willing to part with him upon any terms. What we eagerly desire to have, we fear to lose: he that loveth money, oh, how loth is he to part with it? You shall as soon wring water out of a stone; as money out of his purse; it was a sign *Esa* loved not his birth-right very dearly, because he parted with it so easily; but the man in the Gospel loved his sheep well, and the woman loved her groat well, that took such pains as they did to seek them out again when they had lost them: Certainly Christ is worth keeping, if you have him, worth a seeking, if you have lost him; they that love him as they should, will rather do any thing then part with him; to others the matter is not great, whether they part with Christ or keep him, they are indifferent; and the services they do him, they do rather out of fashion, than out of love: he that serves a master whom he loves not, his service is an hard task

Quod vehementer cupis habere, times perdere:

to him; but they that love him heartily, serve him cheerfully, they will suffer no occasions to part them from him, or if at any time they do chance to lose him, they will never leave till they have recovered and found him: A man who loseth his friend, loseth one half of himself, he is at once both alive and dead, and death accords not with life, save only to make him more miserable: The absence of Christ is bitter to him, to whom his presence is sweet. See how restless the Spouse was, *Cant. 3.* when she sought him whom her soul loved; when she sought him and found him not, she could never be at rest till she had got where he was, and when once she had him she held him; she would not let him go then till she had brought him home to her Mothers House, to the chamber of her that conceived her. A Love-sick soul desireth nothing more then the presence of Christ, here and in Heaven: here in the use of his Ordinances, Word and Sacraments; and they that do indeed love Christ, do love to meet him in these; in his Word, that they may confer with him; in his Sacraments that they may eat and drink with him. *Latatur ancilla ad vocem Petri, latatur anima ad vocem Christi:* The Damsel rejoyced at the voice of Peter, and the soul rejoyceth that the voice of Christ; but these are but his back parts, the shadow of his presence hereafter: then we shall have his presence in glory, and this also all that love him do long for; *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all,* saith holy Paul, Phil. 1. 23. and saith he, *the Crown of life shall be given to all that love the appearing of Christ:* as if none could love him, that did not love his appearing.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

THe second Use is for Exhortation : Labour you to be vehement in your love to Christ : labour every day for more communion with him : Love is the liquescation and melting of the soul toward her beloved ; here no excess is, or can be vitious, the object will warrant the greatest excess of love : it is a sin in other things to be violent, but not to be violent for the Kingdom of God ; it is a sin to be sick of love for a poor skin-deep beauty, or for any worldly thing whatsoever, but not for Christ. True it is ! there may be some accidental errors about the greatness of a Christians affections to Christ, when our hearts are so intent upon him, as that we are impatient, when he delays the manifestation of himself to us : but let me tell you, if there be any errors in your love to Christ, he will pardon them ; therefore let your affections be ardent and burning toward Christ. Reason teacheth us, that he is the Abyss of all perfections, and the Center of all love ; so as a man need not fear committing any excess in loving him with all his might. Consider the greatness of Christs love to us ; When the Lord Jesus did first look upon sinners, how black did he see them to be ? but Christs banner over his people is love ; he loved us not according to what we were, but according to what we should be by grace, *He hath loved us, and washed our sins in his blood*, Rev. 1. 5. What was there in man that could attract Christs love to him ? there was neither descent, nor beauty, nor parts, nor riches, nor innocence and goodness ; Now that the love of Christ might be excessive, he makes it to out run the wickedness and sinfulness that is in man : Christ is so good, as he cannot be loved so much as he ought to be, and let a man do his utmost, he is obliged to confess, that the love of Christ doth far exceed the greatness of mans love.

CHAP. XIV.

Use 3.

ARE any of you sick of love for Christ; then let me excite you, with the Love-sick Spouse in my Text, diligently to seek after him whom your soul loveth; and let me tell you for your encouragement, that the Lord Jesus will freely bestow himself upon all those that are sick of love for him, and that earnestly pant and seek after him; to that end seriously weigh these following particulars.

1. Christ giving himself to those that were never sick for him, nor sought for him at all. *I was found of them that sought me not*, Isa. 65. 1. So he gave himself, tendered, and revealed himself to those that never heard of him, and into whose hearts it never came to begg such a gift of God; how much more then shall they find him, that are sick of love for him, and earnestly seek him being revealed and tendered to them in the Gospel, their want and need of him being discovered to them. *Seek and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you, ask and you shall receive.* Shall such receive that never asked? how much more shall they receive, that ask and cry after him! If the door of Gods free grace be opened to such who never knocked at the gate of mercy, how much more will he open the door of mercy to such, who in the sense of misery shall knock earnestly for mercy? It is said of a Roman Emperour, that he would never suffer any Petitioner to go from him with a sad countenance: Christ that is full of such bowels of compassion (put all the tendernesses and bowels of all the compassionate men in the world into one, none can be so tender as his heart is) he will not suffer his Petitioners to go from him with a sad countenance. Jesus Christ may defer his grace, but will not give an absolute denial.

2. Consider that Christ doth as it were wooe poor sinners to seek and sue unto him; he doth as it were put up his bills unto us, when we go to prayer, that we would earnestly pray to his Father, that he might be given to us, which is a manifest proof that he will freely bestow himself upon such as
thus

The Love-sick Spouse.

thus seek for him: God calls to us in this manner, *Call upon me in the day of trouble; ask and you shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you:* What are these but wooing commands? and begging commands? it is a remarkable phrase. *Cant. 2. 14. O my Dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Lo here he takes pleasure in beholding his people praying to him, mourning and lamenting after him; therefore he wooeth his Spouse with prayers, requests and petitions to pray unto him: the prayers of his people are his delight: the praises of Angels and Saints in heaven, and the prayers and praises of the Saints on earth, is all the musick Christ delighteth in: so in the answer of Christ to the woman of Samaria, *John 4. 10. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water:* Christ there did, as it were, beg of her to seek him for living water: he manifested to her, what he was, what he would give unto her, and give it her he would, if she would but ask it of him. The same in effect he speaks to every one of us; if you would ask of me, I would give you living water; *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, open thy heart wide, open thy desires wide, and I will fill thee with mine hidden treasures.*

3. Christ so far condescendeth, as to seek to us to receive him; he follows and pursues rebels with entreaties to make up their peace with God, then much more will he give himself to them that shall pursue him with intreaties. *I am come saith he, to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel:* My great errand into the world, is to seek those that are lost, to bring them bak again. But note that place, *2 Cor. 5. 20. Now then we are Embassadors for Christ, &c.* Ministers are Christs Embassadors; and our commission is to treat a peace between an angry God and sinful men; the word that we preach is nothing else but an Embassy of peace; the Gospel is called a word of reconciliation; but here are the expressions of wonder and astonishment; *as though God did beseech you by*

The Love-sick Spouse.

we, we pray you in Christs stead to be reconciled unto God : God himself by the mouths of his Ministers entreats you ; we are the Mediatours of peace between you and him ; what arguments we use to draw you to Christ, are Christs arguments ; when we command you it is as though God commanded you ; when we exhort you, it is as though God exhorted you : so when we pray, when we threaten, &c. so we pray you in Christs stead ; when we pray you by all the mercies of God, by all the bowels of Christ, by all the love of Christ manifested in giving himself for you by his sufferings ; it is as if Christ did in his own person lay open all that he done and suffered for you, and entreat you to be reconciled : Now shall the God of infinite glory and Majesty so far condescend as to beseech us, and to pray us to be reconciled, will not he then freely bestow himself upon us when we are sick of love for him, when we beseech him and diligently seek him !

4. Consider he makes a gracious Proclamation, inviting all, excepting none out of it, manifesting his readiness, freely to bestow himself on every one that shall seek unto him, John 7. 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.* Where the greatest concourse of people was, there the Proclamation of mercy was published. If any among you thirst after living waters, let him come to me and drink let him that will come, *He, every one that is thirsty, come and buy without money,* the poorest sort are the most acceptable customers: so Prov. 1. 20, 21. *Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she crieth in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the City, she uttereth her words without in the streets ; in the high street, among the press, in the Congregation, in the assemblies. Why doth wisdom make such publick Proclamation ? It is 1. To shew his freeness and readiness to receive all that come, and to refresh every thirsty soul that cometh to him. 2. To take off all excuses, that none shall pretend ignorance, nor pretend they had no offer of salvation.*

5. Consider, that Jesus Christ will put by none that seeketh him ; *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast off,*
John

John 6. 37. Whosoever betakes himself to Christ for his only Saviour is embraced. I will in no wise cast him out. *and* it is a double Negative. The unworthiest of sinners, the greatest of sinners have been received when they have come unto him; The blind and the lame, let them come in; let the door of mercy and righteousness be opened that they may enter in.

6. Consider Christs unspeakable readiness to do what he did, and suffer all that he did for us. Christ speaking of his sufferings saith, *With a desire have I desired to eat this paschever*: Shall he love us so much as to give himself to death for us? and will not the same love encline him to give himself to those that are sick of love for him, and earnestly seek him? Christ did manifest more love in dying for sinners, then he doth in giving himself to sinners that long after him.

7. Consider his manifold and gracious promises made to the generation of seekers: he hath spoken it in the word of a God that cannot lie, *You shall find me: I will be found of you: I will hear you, Turn and you shall live, Those that hunger and thirst shall be filled*: He is faithful and just, and will keep promise. The Promises of God shew two things, 1. Gods willingness to communicate himself to his people in all kinds of mercies, for promises are but the manifestations of his will. 2. To encourage every thirsty and love-sick soul to seek him: Promises are Gods earnest-penny that he will make good his word unto us. ——— To this, let me add the reason of it, consider Christs nature, though he be in heaven, he is full of bowels of compassion, and much renders the deplorable estate and case of the love-sick spouse that thirsteth & seeketh after him: he knoweth his peoples wants, their straits, their fears, and when they fly to him for succour and relief, being faithful and merciful, he will help them, *Heb. 2. 17, 18.* See why Christ would be made like unto his brethren, like us in substance of nature, in natural properties, in natural infirmities, in suffering of miseries, in tentations, it was that he might be merciful, and that he might be able and willing to succour us: his participation of our nature, miseries and temptations, is a pawn and pledge that he will help us.

CHAP. XV.

Use 4.

I Shall now give you directions how ye may get your hearts into a longing frame after Christ: Beloved the least thing tending to salvation is very difficult; most men say, who doth not desire Christ, and ask after him, but much is required to get true desires after Christ.

1. Labour to know what thou art without Christ; Thou art a cursed, sinful, helpless, hopeless creature without him. Thou art a condemned person to eternal death: hell waits to devour to thee; and the wrath of an Almighty God is ready to fall on thee every moment: Thou must answer God for every sin, and thou canst not answer for one of a thousand. Thou must endure the extremity of his wrath to eternity, and art not able to endure it for a moment; labour to believe and know this, and to perswade thy own heart, that this is thy estate and condition.

2. Labour to know what God hath appointed and ordained Christ to be, *viz.* to be a Saviour, and to be the only Saviour of such wretched men as thou art: if ever thy sins be satisfied, it is by Christ alone that died, if ever thou hast redemption from the curse and condemnation, it is by Christ that died for thee.

3. Labour to know what a man is having Christ, *viz.* righteous before God, a reconciled friend to God; a *Jedidjah*, beloved of God, one (as God said of Christ) in whom he is well pleased, an heir of heaven, that art as far above all thy sins, the curse, the wrath of God, as the highest heaven is above the lowest hell: were men but truly perswaded of these things, Christ would be the desire of their souls, they would be sick of Love for him.

4. Know thy wants, thy utter insufficiency and inability without him; labour to perswade thy heart thou hast nothing, thou wantest all things, thou canst do nothing,

want

want will put thee upon longings after him : Beggars wants will make them importunate, hunger and thirst will make a desire Manna and Living waters.

5. Perswade thy self of thy absolute need of Christ, labour feelingly to know thy necessity of him : Christ thou must have, if thou wilt escape the damnation to come.

6. Know the worth of Christ : all created glories, comforts good things, are no more to be compared to him, than a pins head to the terrestrial globe : Worth hath an attractive power, it will draw out the longings of men after it.

7. Labour to see the necessity of ministerial pressing the terrors, the curse of the Law home to the hearts of sinners : Ministers of the Gospel must be *Beauvirges*, sons of thunder, they must lift up their Voices like trumpets, and cry woe, woe : The end of such a way of Preaching is not to drive men to despair, as the world injuriously censurcth it ; the end is to convince men of their misery, of their dolefull estate, that they might long for Christ, and be sick of love for him : We preach the Law to drive you to Gospel-mercy ; we preach damnation to drive you to Christ, the Authour and finisher of our salvation : When a man cries Fire in the streets, it is to stir up men to labour to quench it : When a Physician tells a man he is ill, it is to make him to take Physick, and not to make him to despair of life.

8. Labour to see the necessity of the work of the spirit of bondage upon our hearts ; the spirit of comfort is first, a spirit of bondage, of fear and terrour to us ; he therefore terrifieth us with sin, that our hearts may break for longings after Christ. He makes us sorrowful, that sorrow may beget vehement desires in us after Christ, 2 Cor. 7. God brings his Church into a wilderness, and then he speaks comfortably to her, *Hos. 2.*

CHAP. XVI.

Object.

BUt here some poor soul is apt to say; I have been long sick of love for Christ, thirsted after him, asked for Christ of God my Father, yet my request is not answered, I go mourning all the day for want of him whom my soul loveth: insomuch that I fear, I shall go without him.

Resp.

For answer hercunto consider these four things.

1. That Christ will make himself known to his people in his own time, not when we will, but when he pleaseth: he will turn our Water into Wine in his time, not in ours, and his time, is in truth. As *Joseph* did not presently manifest himself to his brethren, but dealt roughly with them for a while, and put them into great fears what should become of them, but at last could refrain no longer, but told them with tears, *I am Joseph your Brother whom ye sold*: so Christ suffers his people to long for him, and they are in fears what will become of them, but at last he will manifest himself to them, *I am your Christ, your Saviour, whom you seek, whom you long after.*

2. Some obtain Christ sooner than others; some lie a great while under terrors, under desires, under soul-sickness; others but a little while; some like the impotent man, lie many years at the pool, before they are put in, others are put in within a while after they come to the pool: Some lie like Christ himself, but three-dayes in the grave, and then they rise triumphant Conquerours over their doubts, sorrows, fears and terrors: over sin and Devils; being assured that Christ is theirs: others lie a long while in the grave of fears and terrors: Some God leadeth into *Canaan* through a vast, solitary, dry wilderness; others go but a few steps from *Egypt* to *Canaan*: Some feed on honey, and are carried in Christs bosome to heaven, saith a Judicious Divine, and others are floating in floods of wrath, and their first smile of joy, is when the morning of Eter-

The Love-sick Sponse.

Eternities Sun dawneth in at the window of the soul : some *Rutherford*
sing, and live on sense all the way, and others go in at hea- *in John 11*
ven gates weeping.

3. A man may have Christ and not know it ; a man may be in the state of grace, and not assured ; for assurance is not of absolute necessity to make a man godly ; it conduceth to the *bene esse*, but not to the *esse*, to the comfort of godliness, not to the being of godliness. Take an instance for illustration : a King that is crowned in his Cradle, is truly and rightly the King, though he knows not so much for the present ; and while he is in the Cradle, he is attended with Princes and Nobles, that give him Royal respect, and service : so a man may be in Christ, in the state of grace, and not be assured of it.

4. True and unfeigned desires after grace, are grace : *Blissed are they that hunger and thirst after Christs righteousness, they shall be satisfied*, Matth. 5. 6. Your very desires, if they be true and constant, do entitle you to the promise of righteousness : constant desires are streams of those living waters that flow out of the bellies of true believers.

CHAP. XVII.

THe last Use is for comfort to poor distressed Christians *Use 5.*
that are cast down with the sense of the decay of
their first love to Christ : it is a strong temptation upon many
Christians, because they find their love abated, and not
to be so strong as it was at first, therefore they question
the truth of their conversion, and think they had never any
sound work of grace wrought upon their hearts.

1. Christians in this life are like unto children, whose *Resp.*
Growth

The Love-sick Spouse.

growth is not alwayes perceived by those that alwayes live and converse with them; so a Christian grows in grace and in love to Christ, though perhaps himself perceiveth it not.

2. Though he may not have such a fair flourishing top, and branch, yet he may be better rooted than before, have a deeper and stronger rooting in grace: The Apostle *Paul* speaks of being *rooted and grounded in love*. The affections of Christians to Christ at their first conversion, are like the affections of new married persons: at first their love seems to be excessive, but after they have lived together some years in a married estate, this excess of love, this violent tide of affection abaterh, yet true love abideth still between them: so a Christian may not have such violent pangs of love, and such passionate affections to Christ, and such strong expressions of love to Christ afterwards, as he had at his first conversion, yet true love may still abide in the soul.

*Sym. desert.
soul.*

3. A Christian that is of long standing in Christianity, is a more experimental Christian, is more grave, more solid, and practical than he was before; he hath now more ability to resist tentations, to overcome corruptions, to perform holy duties than at his first conversion: then a Christian is nothing but love and affection, but afterward more experimental and practical: an Apple, that is green and unripe, may look as fair and be as big then as ever afterward; but it hath not that sweetness, that good juice and nourishment, as it hath when it cometh to its full maturity: A young man of twenty years old, may be as big and lusty, and more vigorous in complexion, than at any other time afterward, but he hath not that solidity, that judgement, that gravity, that experience, as at the age of thirty or forty years. So it is with a Christian; at first he is but a babe, but a novice, a gristle in grace, but after he cometh to riper years, to be
a grown

a grown man in Christ, his love is more dilated and extended to al the duties of Religion, to all acts of piety toward God, to all acts of charity towards men, and of sobriety toward himself. So then this is no ground for a Christian, that hath the truth of grace in his soul, to be-reave himself of all true comfort, because he finds not his affections so strong toward Christ, as they were or seemed to be at his first conversion.

FINIS.
